

RCW 13.34.820 Permanency for dependent children—Annual report.

(1) The administrative office of the courts, in consultation with the attorney general's office and the department, shall compile an annual report, providing information about cases that fail to meet statutory guidelines to achieve permanency for dependent children.

(2) The administrative office of the courts shall submit the annual report required by this section to appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1st of each year, beginning on December 1, 2007. The administrative office of the courts shall also submit the annual report to a representative of the foster parent association of Washington state.

(3) The annual report shall include information regarding whether foster parents received timely notification of dependency hearings as required by RCW 13.34.096 and 13.34.145 and whether caregivers submitted reports to the court.

(4) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the administrative office of the courts shall, in consultation with others, identify measures of relational permanency and child well-being and shall report to the legislature by July 1, 2025, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the following information:

(a) A plan for reporting on child well-being and relational permanency;

(b) A plan for tracking and reporting on whether an order or portion of an order was agreed or contested, and if contested, by which party or parties;

(c) How to make such information publicly available;

(d) What can be reported using existing data;

(e) What additional information should be collected;

(f) What data-sharing agreements are necessary to ensure an accurate picture of the needs of families in the dependency system; and

(g) How many children in dependency have incarcerated parents.

(5) In making these determinations the administrative office of the courts must consult with representatives who have knowledge of data collection systems from the office of the superintendent of public instruction; the health care authority; the department of children, youth, and families; the department of social and health services; the department of corrections; tribal data experts; and any other entity holding relevant data or expertise.

(6) Consistent with RCW 13.50.280, to collect data necessary to evaluate the relational permanency and well-being of dependent children, the administrative office of the courts may execute data-sharing agreements with the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the health care authority, the department of children, youth, and families, the department of corrections, and the department of social and health services. [2024 c 326 s 2; 2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 309; 2016 c 180 s 2; 2007 c 410 s 6.]

Implementation—2024 c 326: "Dependency courts should work to ensure the well-being of dependent children and to ensure that every young person who leaves foster care has relational permanency - meaning they have various long-term relationships that help them feel loved and connected. This includes relationships with siblings, parents, family members, extended family, family friends, mentors, tribes, and where appropriate, former foster family members.

Legal permanency, achieved through reunification, guardianship, or adoption is important, but it is not the only way to provide a sense of belonging and meaningful connections for young people. The federal children's bureau has cautioned that, legal permanence alone does not guarantee secure attachments and lifelong relationships. The relational aspects of permanency are critically important and fundamental to overall well-being, administration on children, youth and families, information memorandum ACYF-CB-IM-20-09, January 5, 2021. Relational permanency is one component of a child's overall well-being. Washington state's data collection should reflect the importance of both relational and legal permanency as well as child well-being." [2024 c 326 s 1.]

Effective date—2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 ss 102, 104-115, 201-227, 301-337, 401-419, 501-513, 801-803, and 805-822: See note following RCW 43.216.025.

Conflict with federal requirements—2017 3rd sp.s. c 6: See RCW 43.216.908.

Short title—2007 c 410: See note following RCW 13.34.138.